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CONCERNING

PRESIDENT GARFIELD'S
ANCESTRY.

A COMMUNICATION

FROM THE

REV. EDWARD G. PORTER.

June 122

Read at the October Meeting

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

CAMBRIDGE:

JOHN WILSON AND SON.

University Press.

1881.

1832225

P. 5470

Charles Henry Baird Esq.

With the receipt of

Edmund P. Baird

Levington, N. H.

RECEIVED
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OFFICE OF THE
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PRESIDENT GARFIELD'S ANCESTRY.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY.]

P. 5470

CONCERNING PRESIDENT GARFIELD'S ANCESTRY.

At the stated meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, held in Boston, Oct. 13, 1881, the Rev. EDWARD G. PORTER spoke of some points relating to President Garfield's ancestry as follows:—

Mr. President, I am sure the members of this Society will take an interest in some letters which have lately come into my hands, written by our lamented President. They relate to his family history, as far as he was himself able to trace it, and were addressed to a relative of his, at present residing in Lexington.

Before reading the letters, permit me to supply from other sources a few facts which will serve to shed additional light upon the subject. It is very gratifying to us to know that our President came from good old Massachusetts stock, being a direct descendant in the ninth generation from Edward Garfield, one of the early settlers of Watertown.

According to Dr. Bond, this Edward and his son, Edward Garfield, Jr.,* must both have come from the old country.

The record here is obscure. Dr. Bond's theory that there were two Edwards, father and son, is a reasonable and, at first sight, almost a necessary one. But the town records, which are well preserved, do not explicitly support such a theory. They frequently mention the name of Edward Garfield (without any distinction) as Selectman in 1638, 1655, and 1662, and as constable even as late as 1661, when the entry occurs, "Ould Garfield and Willi Bond are chosen constables for this yeare ensewing." He was called old not necessarily to distinguish him from a younger Garfield, but perhaps simply on account of his great age, for he must have been about 86 that year, as it is legibly recorded

Edward, Jr., was admitted freeman in 1635, and served as Selectman in 1638, 1655, and 1662. In the original allotments of land, his name appears as a grantee in different sections of the town, and afterward he purchased a large forty-acre lot which had belonged to the Rev. George Phillips, Watertown's first minister, and which was adjacent to land granted to Sir Richard Saltonstall. The property is known in our day as the Governor Gore place.

Benjamin Garfield, born in 1643, the fourth child of Edward, Jr., was a noted *Benjamin Garfield* man in his day; being repeatedly elected to the principal town offices, and serving nine terms as Representative to the General Court between 1689 and 1717. He was also captain of the militia. He married, first, Mehitabel Hawkins, whose gravestone in the old Watertown burying-ground is inscribed as follows:—

MEHETABEL • GEARFEILD
The • Wife • of • BENJAMIN
GEARFEILD • Aged • 25 y^{rs}
and • Deceased • the • 9 Day
of • the • 9 Month • 1675

Captain Garfield's second wife was Elizabeth (mother of Thomas, below), daughter of Matthew *Elizabeth gearfield* Bridger. She outlived him, and married, 1720, Daniel Harrington, of Lexington.

Captain Benjamin died in 1717. His grave may be found near the upper corner of the old Waltham burying-ground on Main Street, near Beaver Brook. It is marked by a good-

in 1672 that "Edward Gearfeild dyed the 11 of June aged about 97." And there is no record of the death of any other Edward at that time.

His first wife (if this be he), Rebecca, the mother of his children, "dyed the 16 of Aprill [1661] aged about 55." And "Edward Gearfeild and Johannah Buckmaster wear maryed 1. 7"; i. e., Sept. 1, 1661. The will of Edward, taken from the Probate files, is given at the end of this paper. It is a quaint document, and shows that the testator (the father of Samuel, Joseph, Rebecca, Abigail, and Benjamin) was in feeble health, and not able to write his name in 1668, or four years before his recorded death at the age of 97. The writer therefore ventures to suggest that there was but one Edward, and that many of his public services, as well as his second marriage, took place when he was far advanced in years. Instances might be quoted in our own time of similar services and even marriages at as great an age.

If this theory be correct, the President must be counted as a descendant in the eighth, and not the ninth, generation from the first Garfield in this country.

sized, thick slab of slate-stone, ornamented with a winged head and scroll work, and bears the inscription: —

Here Lyes Buried the
Body of Cap^t BENJAMIN
GEARFEILD Aged 74 Year
Who Departed This Life
November the 28 1717

Blessed are the Dead that Die in the Lord.

The Captain had eight children, of whom the fourth was Lieutenant (sometimes called Captain) Thomas Garfield, born 1680, who established his home in that part of Weston which, in 1754, was incorporated with portions of Lexington and Concord as the town of Lincoln. His fine old homestead



THE GARFIELD HOUSE IN LINCOLN.*

may still be seen about one mile directly south of the centre of Lincoln, standing half way between the Weston road and Beaver Pond, and approached by a lane, shaded by pine trees. It is a large, square, two-story farm-house of the better sort, with the usual capacious chimney in the centre. I drove over

* Drawn by E. G. Champney.

there with a friend one day this week, and I am free to say that for beauty of situation, ample farm accessories, and the general air of rural comfort, I do not know of a place anywhere in the vicinity more desirable as a residence.

The house is now temporarily occupied by Mr. Frank Wheeler, but until within a few years it was in the possession of the Fiske family, who were descendants of the Garfields.

Lieutenant Thomas married, 1706, Mercy Bigelow, of the well-known Watertown family. They had twelve children, of whom the third was Thomas Garfield, Jr., who was born in 1713.

He married, 1742, Rebecca Johnson, of Lunenburg, and, with his father and his brother John,* he was in 1747 among the twenty-five founders of the First Church of Lincoln. Thomas, Jr.,† was, like his father, a lieutenant in his town's company. The military spirit at that time was growing rapidly, and Abram Garfield, youngest son of this Thomas, participated in the fight at Concord Bridge, as will appear in one of the following letters.

The graves of Thomas, Jr., his wife Rebecca, and son Abram, may be seen in the old graveyard on the hill near the Lincoln church, marked by the tall slate-stone slabs of the period, and inscribed as follows:—

— *Memento Mori* —

In Memory of Mr.
THOMAS GEARFIELD
Who departed this
Life January 3^d
1774 In the 62^d
Year of his age.

The Sin of Adam's laid me low
For Sin hath wrought an overthrow,
From dust I came to dust I'm come
And now the dust becomes my home
When Christ comes down with Saints to reign
The dust me no more shall detain.

* Town treasurer of Lincoln in 1759 and 1760. John Garfield and Thankful his wife are buried in the lower cemetery at Lincoln, near the British soldiers grave.

† Selectman in 1759, and town treasurer in 1770.

Here lyes y^e Body of
 Mrs REBEKAH GEARFIELD
 Consort to Mr.
 THOMAS GEARFIELD
 Who departed this Life
 Feb^{ry} the 3 1763 in y^e
 43^d Year of Her Age.

She was Virtuous in Life & Submissive at Death.

In Memory of Mr.
 ABRAHAM GEARFIELD
 Son of Mr THOMAS
 GARFIELD and Mrs
 REBECCA his wife
 Who departed this
 Life Augt 15th 1775 In
 the 28 year of his age.

Under these clods my Body doth lie
 Though in my prime yet I must die
 It was Gods will it should be so
 Therefore take warning all below.

In consequence of the elevation of General Garfield to the Presidency, and especially since the excitement attending his assassination, these graves of his ancestors have become the object of tender interest to the people of Lincoln. On the sad funeral Monday, after appropriate services at church, they assembled in the cemetery, and by the hands of the children strewed flowers in profusion around these ancient and now honored graves.

It is not necessary that I should say more to complete the connection between the early ancestors of the President and those of whom he himself speaks in the following letters. I will only add that Solomon Garfield, born 1743, the President's great-grandfather, was the son of Thomas, Jr., whose epitaph is given above. While a young man, Solomon removed to Westminster,* in this State. His

Solomon Garfield

* For a fuller account of Solomon and his family at Westminster, see the paper upon President Garfield's New England ancestry, since read by Senator How at the October meeting of the American Antiquarian Society, and to be published with that Society's Proceedings.

name appears in the list of Captain Noah Miles's company, which marched from that town to Cambridge on hearing of the events of the 19th of April, 1775.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 8, 1872.

MY DEAR SIR, — You can hardly imagine the pleasure which your letter of the 3d instant has given me. You will better understand why, when I tell you the causes which have so nearly shut me off from any knowledge of my ancestry.

My father moved into the wild woods of Ohio before he was twenty years of age, and died when he was thirty-three, and of course when his children were all small, and I, the youngest, but an infant.

Separated thus from the early home of our father, we had but scanty means of obtaining any thing like accurate information of his ancestry. The most I knew, until quite recently, were the family traditions retained in the memory of my mother, as she had heard them from father and his mother.

Before giving you any of the later facts which have come to my knowledge, I will copy from a memorandum I wrote in 1858, as to facts given me by my mother. Here it is: —

I. Solomon Garfield (son of Thomas Garfield) came from the town of Weston, Massachusetts, to Worcester,* Otsego County, New York, where he spent the latter part of his life, and died about 1807, by an accidental fall from a beam in his barn. His wife, my mother thinks, was a Miss Lucy Brown,† from Boston or near Boston, but of the name she is not perfectly certain. Your record says she was Sarah Stimson.

But little was known of Solomon's father's family beyond one positive and one supposed fact. For a reason you will see presently it was known that he had one brother by the name of Abraham. It was supposed that Solomon's father's name was Thomas.

II. To Solomon and his wife there were born in Worcester,‡ Otsego County, New York, the following

Children:—

born, 19 1773

1. Thomas, b. 1774, d. 1801, Worcester, New York.
2. Solomon.
3. Rebecca.
4. Hannah.
5. Lucy.

* Not directly. He removed from Lincoln about 1770 to Westminster, Massachusetts, where he resided at least until 1788.

† Evidently a mistake. Lucy Garfield, sister of Solomon, married Nathan Brown, of Lincoln.

‡ The children were all born in Westminster, Massachusetts.

III. Thomas Garfield (1 above) married Asenath Hill of Schoharie County, New York, who was born 1778. To them were born in Worcester, New York, *She is 121 years - 5 months*
(3) 11 years - 10 months

Children:—

1. Polly, b. 1795.
2. Betsey, b. 1797.
3. Abraham, b. 1799, Dec. 28, and died in Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, May 3, 1833. He was my father.
4. Thomas, b. 1801, Nov. 19.

Of this family all are dead except Thomas, the youngest, who resides in Newburgh, near Cleveland, Ohio, and has a large family.

IV. Abraham Garfield (3 above) married Eliza Ballou, who was born in Richmond, New Hampshire, Sept. 21, 1801. They were married Feb. 3, 1820.

To them were born

Children:—

1. Mehitabel, b. Jan. 28, 1821. Still living.
2. Thomas, b. Oct. 16, 1822. " "
3. Mary, b. Oct. 19, 1824. " "
4. James Ballou, b. Oct. 21, 1826, and died Jan. 8, 1829.
5. James Abram, b. Nov. 19, 1831. (Myself)

V. James A. Garfield (5 above) was married Nov. 11, 1858, to Lucretia Rudolph, of Hiram, Portage County, Ohio. To them were born

Children:—

1. Eliza Arabella, b. July 3, 1860, and died Dec. 3, 1863.
2. Harry Augustus, b. Oct. 11, 1863.
3. James Rudolph, b. Oct. 17, 1865.
4. Mary, b. Jan. 17, 1867.
5. Irvin McDowell, b. Aug. 3, 1870.

So much I can give you of my own knowledge, except the traditional accounts mentioned above.

My father Abraham was named after his great-uncle, the brother of his grandfather Solomon, and inherited, or should have inherited, a piece of land which the said great-uncle Abraham willed to Thomas, and [which was willed] by him to my father, for his name. It was this circumstance which brought down to us the fact of Solomon's having a brother of that name, though I will mention in passing that it did not bring the farm with it, as the early death of my father left the matter unsettled, and it lapsed.

During the last eighteen years I have, from time to time, picked up

fragmentary facts and traditions concerning our family and its origin. Many of these traditions are vague and no doubt worthless, but I have no doubt they have some truth in them.

One of them is that the family was originally from Wales. This tallies with what you say concerning the original Edward Garfield coming from the neighborhood of Chester, England. I stood on the walls of Chester a little more than four years ago, and looked out on the bleak mountains of Wales, whose northern boundary lay at my feet along the banks of the Dee. Possibly I was near our ancestral home. A Welsh scholar told me, not many years ago, that he had no doubt our family was connected with the builders of an old castle in Wales, long since in ruins, but still known as Gaerfili Castle.*

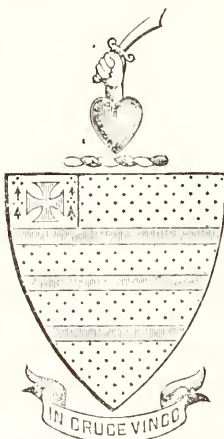
I give you this conjecture for what it is worth.

I have seen the family crest lude in your letter. It was years ago by the Rev. John Haven, Connecticut, and I it in a book of English heraldry have a spare copy of the cut, to receive it.†

While I was in college, at Massachusetts, in 1854 to 56, old Tyringham and Lee, in ty, Massachusetts, and there number of Garfields, some old residents of that neighborhood were the names Solomon which seemed to have continued family. I found that they the neighborhood of Boston.

In an old graveyard in Tyringham (now Monterey), I found the tombstone of Lieutenant Isaac Gearfield (for that I learn was the early spelling of the name), and on the stone was recorded 1755, as the date of his death. The family told me that he (Lieutenant Isaac) crossed the mountains into the wilderness of Western Massachusetts in about 1739, and slept the first night under his cart. Comparing this fact with your record, I should say that he was the same as the Isaac whom you put down as the fifth child of Lieutenant Thomas Garfield (No. IV.)‡ and the next younger brother of Thomas (the father of Solomon, my great-grandfather) and an older brother of Samuel, your great-grandfather.

Since writing the above I have obtained an old history of Berkshire



to which you all-shown me some Garfield, of New have since seen aldry. If you I should be glad

Williamstown, I went down to Berkshire County found a large twenty families, hood. Among and Thomas, ned along in the had come from

* An imposing pile of ruins near Cardiff, covering many acres, and spelled sometimes Caerphilly.

† The steel die containing the coat-of-arms was sent to General Garfield, and will doubtless be found among his family papers.

‡ Referring to a list of the earlier branches of the family taken from Bond's History of Watertown.

County, Massachusetts, written by the Rev. David Dudley Field, and published in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1829.

On pages 277 to 280, I find the history of the organization and settlement of the town of Tyringham. From this account it appears that in 1735 the Legislature authorized the laying out of four new towns, each six miles square, the first of which towns was Tyringham. The historian says, "It was divided by lot, four of the proprietors being clergymen, and they drew the following lots:—

" Rev. William Williams of Weston drew Lot No. 38, now occupied by Daniel Garfield. . . . The settlement was commenced in 1739. In April of that year, Lieutenant Isaac Garfield and Thomas Slaton moved into Lot No. 1. . . . About 1750, John Jackson moved into the town from Weston, and persons by the name of Thomas and Orton . . . moved into it about the same time . . . The first log house in this section of the town (North Tyringham) was erected by Deacon Thomas Orton, about 1762, on the ground since owned and occupied by his son-in-law, Isaac Garfield."

You will see from these extracts that the settlement of Tyringham was begun by persons from Weston, and that the Garfields that came into Tyringham intermarried with families from Weston.

It seems to make the conclusion very strong that the Garfields were themselves from Weston. I have no doubt that the Lieutenant Isaac Garfield, whose tombstone I have mentioned above, is the Garfield named in the records of Watertown and Weston, referred to in your letter.

I am sure I do not need to apologize to you for this long letter, for if it gives you half the pleasure yours has given me, you will not tire of its length.

I beg you to write me any further details you may possess and any you may hereafter obtain.

Should you ever come to Washington while I am here, or into the neighborhood of my home at Hiram, Ohio, while I am there, consider yourself invited as a welcome guest.

Very truly yours,

E. I. GARFIELD, Esq.,

J. A. GARFIELD.

Comptroller's Office, DETROIT, MICH.

To ———

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 3, 1873.

DEAR SIR, — Yours of the 30th January came duly to hand. I gave it to ——— Garfielde, with the request that he furnish such information as he could on the point referred to. I enclose you his note received to-day. The final "e" with which he spells his name is an affectation of his own, and I am sorry he uses it.

Very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 7, 1880.

E. I. GARFIELD, MT. AUBURN, MASS.

You have my thanks for your kind letter of the 5th instant, giving me the details of old family history, as found in Watertown and vicinity.

I have preserved* your interesting letters on the subject written years ago, and shall take pleasure in adding to my stock of information any thing further you may send me.

My History of Watertown is in Ohio, and I am not certain, but I think there is no map in it, and if you will send me one I will be very glad, and will place it among my collection of papers and data in relation to the Garfield family. I am always glad to receive any information on this subject, at any convenient time.

Since our last correspondence on the subject, I found an interesting record in Journals of the Continental Congress. It is recorded there that John Hoar and Abram Garfield, both of Lincoln, made their affidavit,* which was printed by the Continental Congress, showing how the attack at Concord Bridge began. Both these men were in the fight at the bridge.

John Hoar was the grandfather† of the present Senator Hoar, and Abram Garfield was my great-uncle, after whom my father, Abram Garfield, was named, and from whom, through my father, I got my middle name.

I shall be glad to hear from you at any time.

Very truly yours,
J. A. GARFIELD.

MENTOR, OHIO, Jan'y 19, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR, — Yours of the 15th instant came duly to hand. The pen to which you refer has not yet come.

I have read with interest your additional memoranda concerning the Garfields of Massachusetts, and also your — communication in reference to —

MR. E. I. GARFIELD,
EAST LEXINGTON, MASS.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, July 1, 1881.‡

DEAR SIR, — The pressure upon the President's time prevents him from sending a personal response to your note of the 30th ultimo. He directs me, therefore, to acknowledge its receipt and to say that it is impossible at this time for him to tell whether he will be able to spare

* See depositions taken at Lexington, April 23, 1775, by authority of the Provincial Congress.

† Great-grandfather.

‡ This letter was written late Friday evening, July 1, and postmarked "Washington, July 2, 1 P. M.," three hours after the assassination. It must, therefore, have been one of the very last written or dictated by the President.

the time to make the trip you propose. He expects to be at Concord, Massachusetts, for a short time, and if it is possible for him to go to Watertown he will be glad to do so, but cannot tell certainly about it until he reaches Concord.

Expressing the President's cordial thanks for your courtesy,

I am yours very respectfully,

J. STANLEY BROWN,

Mr. E. L. GARFIELD,

Private Secretary.

27 Franklin St., BOSTON, MASS.

It is well known that the President was anticipating great pleasure in his projected trip to New England, upon which he had just started when he was stricken down by the hand of the assassin. It was his intention, after visiting his *Alma Mater* at Williamstown and making a brief tour of the mountains, to fulfil a long-cherished desire of seeing the early homes and graves of his ancestors, and the adjacent historical sites made famous by the events of April 19, 1775.

"THIS IS YE LAST WILL OF EDWARD GARFIELD."

[Dec. 30, 1668.]

I, EDWARD GARFIELD of Watertown being sick in body yet through gods goodnes sound in my memory, doe declare this to be my last will and testament as followeth:

1stly. I give and bequeeth unto my son Samucl Garfeild tenn pounds to be paid in corne or catle within one year after my decease: and forty akers of my land: lieng on the side of Prospect hill: and a peece of meddow containeing aboute two akers and a halfe and being on the east side of Stony brooke: the same peece of meddow which ye s^d Samuell have made use already for diverse years with my allowance: provided ye s^d Samuell alows a cart way through ye s^d peece of meddow to my meddow on the other side of Stony brooke: also I give unto ye s^d Samuell all my wearing cloathes and my great bible: now the reason why I give no more to my s^d son Samucl is because he marieng many years ago I have formerly given him both land and other estate.

2^dly. I give unto my son Joseph Garfeild ye house and land which he now lives in: ye land containing about nine and twenty akers: also I give unto ye s^d Joseph ten akers of meddow lieng on the farther side of Chesters brooke westward comainely called plaine meddow: also I give unto ye s^d Joseph my firme as also a maare colt of about a year old.

3^dly. I give unto my daughter Rebecka Mixer twenty pounds to be paid her in corne or catle within two years after my descees: as also two pewter platters.

4thly. I give unto my daughter Abigall Garfeild twenty pounds, tenn pound to be paid at the time of her mariage and tenn pounds to be paid two years after: but if ye s^d Abigall shall die unmarried, then my will yt ye s^d twenty pounds be equally divided to Samucl Garfeild my son and Joseph Garfeild my son: and Benjamin Garfeild my son and Rebecka Mixer my daughter: and if ye s^d Abigall do live unmarried yt then my will is she shall be allowed five and twenty shillings a yeere so long as she lives unmarried. Also I give unto ye s^d Abigall a fether bed and boulder with a rugg and two blankets and one pewter platter.

5thly. I give unto my grandchild Sara Parkhust one ewe sheepe and an ewe lamb.

6thly. I give unto Sara Garfeild my grandchild seven pounds provided she servs oute her time: but if she servs not oute her time then my will is yt she shall have but fifty shillings only:

7thly. I give unto Ephraim Garfeild my grandchild two cows to be paid within three years after my desceese.

8thly. I give and bequeeth unto my beloved wife a cow which my s^d wife shall have liberty to choose among all mi catle.

Allo I allow unto my s^d wife five pound a yeer as long as she lives, for which my wife had a bond of mee before marriage:

ye s^d five pound to be paid in wheet and peese and ry and indian by eequal proportion: (if my executor have them growing) at contry price at such place in Cambridge as my s^d wife shall apoynt: also my will is yt my s^d wife shall if she please continue in my house: she shall have ye new bed chamber for her use with all the furnature in it, for ye space of seven month: as also a sufficiency of fier wood for her owne particular burning: also my will is that my beloved wife above s^d and my daughter Abigall above s^d and my maid Ann should enjoy the benefit of what flax or hemp or wool there shall be in my house at my desceese: and also yt they are to live at ye charge of my estate for ye space of seven months as above s^d.

As an adition to my beloved wivs legace my will is yt she shall enjoy a fether bed and boulster and two litle pillows which weare of her owne makeing: also a wolline wheele and a linin wheele.

Allo I doe nominate and apoynt my loveing son Benjamin Garfeild executor to this my will and testiment: to receive all due to mee: and to pay all my just debts.

Thus rezineing my spirit to god yt gave it, and my body to ye dust from whence it was takin: I declare this to be my last will and testiment: and doe hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of Decem. one thousand six hundred sixty and eight: desiring my loveing frends Nathan Fisk senior and William Bond senior to se that this my will be performed.

Edward Garfeild did owne this to bee his will and did subscribe to it on ye day and yeer ^{as} above s^d as testifieth

NATHAN FISKE. WILLIAM BOND.

The marke of
EDWARD X GARFEILD.

Taken upon oath 11.5. 1672.

W^m. BOND & NATHAN FISKE.

Before Capt. DANIEL GOOKIN

And THOMAS DANFORTH. R.



JAN 75



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

